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From the Office of the Director of Health

Protect Yourself from Mosquito Bites and Illness

Mosquito season is nearly upon us. While their bite leaves arms and legs itchy and red, they can also spread diseases such as West Nile Virus, which infected more than 64 people in Missouri last year. Greene County did not have any positive West Nile Virus cases last year, but it is important that county residents remain vigilant in the fight against mosquitoes.

To reduce the mosquito population and avoid mosquito bites, individuals should –

- Eliminate mosquito habitat in yards by removing standing water.
- Dispose of old tires, cans, wading pools or any other items that collect water.
- Make sure roof gutters are draining properly.
- Change the water in birdbaths and pet dishes daily.
- To avoid mosquito bites, stay indoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long sleeved shirts and long pants when spending time outdoors.
- Use an approved insect repellent, and follow the instructions on the product label.
- Use Mosquito Dunks® according to the product label to treat standing water.

The Springfield-Greene County Health Department is also working to protect the community. We will continue to trap and test mosquitoes this year. We will also actively monitor hospital and clinic reports for patients with West Nile Virus symptoms or illnesses. We will not be collecting or testing dead birds.

Individuals who discover a dead bird on their property should put on disposable gloves and place the bird in an outside dumpster. While there is no evidence that West Nile Virus can be spread directly from birds to people, dead birds can carry other diseases and should not be handled with bare hands.

Please note: Other local public health departments in southwest Missouri may be handling West Nile Virus surveillance, mosquito trapping and testing and dead bird collection differently. Individuals should contact their local public health department for more information on mosquito control programs in their county.

For more information on West Nile Virus or mosquito control, visit the Health Department's website at <http://health.springfieldmogov.org/> or call (417) 864-1658.

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